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**RUSSIAN THEME IN CREATIVE WORK  
OF PEOPLE'S ARTIST TOGHRUL NARIMANBEYOV**

**Abstract.** In this paper the subject of the research is the Russian theme in the creative work of the modern prominent brush master, the national artist of Azerbaijan Toghrul Narimanbayov. The author notes that the artist's creativity is characterized by bright national colors, ornamentality of compositions, themes related to his home city with that historical and architectural symbols like GyzGalasy, Shirvanshahs Palace, and massive walls of Icharishahar fortress. Along with this in the artist's creativity a certain place is also occupied the Russian subjects, which in the author's opinion come out in two main genres like portraits and landscapes. This is a series of interesting works, where the artist has retained a bright and rich palette characteristic of his national themes. Such works cause interest as portraits of the poet and artist Viktor Golyavkin, a friend of the artist, stage director Sergei Gerasimov, as well as Galina Vishnevskaya and Mstislav Rostropovich. It is curious that the artist painted M. Rostropovich's two portraits and each of them has different characteristic bright palette, unique compositional, ideological and artistic peculiarities. In both portraits Rostropovich is depicted playing the cello, surrounded by symbolic artistic elements, famous architectural monuments of Baku, the city of his childhood, as well as well-known cities of the world. Artist's city landscapes are also interesting, which depict such architectural sights of the capital of Russia as St. Basil's Cathedral, Red Square with the Spasskaya Tower, and a number of other buildings.

**Key words:** Toghrul Narimanbayov, the Russian theme in art, Mstislav Rostropovich, Galina Vishnevskaya, Vasili Blazhenni Temple.

**Introduction.** The creativity work of People's artist Toghrul Narimanbeyov, who is famous for his individual, colorful shades, national color in Azerbaijani

art, is wide and varied in content. “The artistic language of the artist is so colorful, bright and rich that it is difficult to relate him to a certain creative direction. The artist himself interpreted his works as a unity of abstract and figurative art” [7].

It is possible to find interesting works related to Russia, Russian life and life style. The works are mainly painted with oil paint on canvas. We can see portraits of different people among them – the portraits of Toghrul Narimanbeyov’s nanny Anna Andreyevna (on canvas with oil paint, 1962; it is emphasized in some sources that she is Polish), his friend Petr Matveyevich (on canvas with oil paint, 1968), artist Rastinin (autolithography, 1972), writer and artist Victor Golyavkin, producer Sergei Gerasimov and actress Tamara Makarova (on canvas with oil paint, 1983), world famous violoncello master Mstislav Rostropovich, his wife, prominent actress Galina Vishnevskaya in the role as Toska, also the temple of Vasili Blazhenni in Moscow (all on canvas with oil paint, 1991) and etc.

**The interpretation of the main material.** As you see, the great artist’s most works on the Russian theme are portraits. They are mainly divided into two groups. The first group includes the artist’s friends, relatives, the second – the well-known figures of the 20th century Russian culture. The portrait “Anna Andreyevna” is especially distinguished among the portraits included into the first group. As it’s known, Toghrul Narimanbeyov’s childhood years were not so happy. This merciful woman was a supporter for him in the most difficult moments and awakened love for art, music in his heart. It’s not accidental that T.Narimanbeyov painted the portrait of this old woman in the early 1960s and considered it as one of his best works [6].

A middle-aged, white-haired man with glasses, a cigarette in his left hand, his right hand in his pocket was described in Pavel Matveyevich’s portrait. His efficient pose, characteristic facial features, thoughtful face reveal that this person has objective outlook, doesn’t like to be idle and he is optimist, hard-working.

T.Narimanbeyov was a participant of numerous exhibitions. We would like to remind some of his exhibitions in Russian – the Soviet period. These exhibitions were both individual and collective. Of course, the majority of the collective exhibitions that the artist participated in during his youth years were all-union. Most Azerbaijani artists – T.Salahov, M.Abdullayev, I.Akhundov, S.Bahlulzadeh, B.Mirzezadeh, M.Rehmanzadeh, E.Shahtakhtinskaya, O.Sadigzadeh, N.Gasimov, N.Abdurrahmanov, Y.Huseynov, L.Feyzullayev,

B.Aliyev, R.Babayev, Najafgulu, etc. participated in these exhibitions with their paintings during 60-80s of the last century. For example, his new painting “Dawn on the Caspian Sea” (1957) was exhibited in All-Union exhibition on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the October Revolution in Moscow during the early stage of the artist’s creative work – in 1957 [1, 133]. The young artist’s path to the summit of the great art began with the same work. After that, T.Narimanbeyov began to participate regularly in exhibitions in Moscow with other Azerbaijani artists. Also his works were exhibited in exhibitions of “The 40th anniversary of Komsomol” in 1958, the 50th anniversary of the October Revolution in 1967. At that time T.Narimanbeyov had already gained popularity in the Moscow art environment. Russian colleagues – artists and critics knew and loved him. The artist’s first personal exhibition was held in Moscow in 1967. The artist participated in the exhibition of the 50th anniversary of Komsomol in Moscow in the next year – 1968. Toghrul Narimanbeyov’s personal exhibition was held in Vilnius, Volgograd and Baku in 1972. Again, T.Narimanbeyov’s paintings were exhibited also in the exhibition of art works dedicated to India at the Moscow Friendship House in 1972 (as it is known, the artist was in creative mission in India in 1971). Two years later, the artist’s personal exhibition consisting of works belonged to Indian series was held in Baku, then in Moscow in 1974. The artist was a participant of three exhibitions held in Moscow in 1981. One of them was the All-Union exhibition “We are building communism”. Numerous artist and sculptors from Azerbaijan exhibited their works in this exhibition. T.Narimanbeyov was among them. For the second time T.Narimanbeyov was a participant of the exhibition “Soviet artists on India” held in Moscow. Finally, the artist’s personal exhibition was held in Moscow in the same year [5, 83-86].

So, even a brief look at T.Narimanbeyov’s artistic activity reveals how close he was with Russia, especially with Moscow. It should be noted that the artist’s work in this field has become a life-style for the most brush masters of Azerbaijan. Together with T.Narimanbeyov, Azerbaijani artists’ paintings were also exhibited in the above mentioned exhibitions. Generally, participation in exhibitions is one of the most active pages of Azerbaijani-Russian fine-arts relation during 50-80s of the last century. We are witnessing it again in the case of T.Narimanbeyov.

T.Narimanbeyov’s creative work has always been the focus of attention of Russian art critics. “Narimanbeyov’s painting is worldwide, they consist of

things, it seems like you can feel his warm breath when you hold your hand for them. At the same time, this painting is a complete antipode of “thingness”, visual forms. The poetic spirit of artistry transforms surroundings into a new, very emotional reality; reality of feelings is stronger than the reality of details here” [2, 11].

Azerbaijani-Russian fine arts relations during independence period had a special significance in T.Narimanbeyov’s creative work. It is interesting that he created mainly portraits in this field during independence years like Tahir Salahov. One of the attractive aspects is that the artist often painted “the celebrities” together. For example, director Sergey Gerasimov’s and actress Tamara Makarova’s portraits can be mentioned. Although these portraits have different compositions, there is a certain connection, idea-aesthetic unity between them. We can say alike words for Mstislav Rostropovich’s and Galina Vishnevskaya’s portraits. These two portraits have different compositions. But the author tried to represent them as if in unity. He represented both masters in the creative process. G.Vishnevskaya was described as performing Tosca part in the work. Thus, the artist represented the actress in dual form – both in her appearance and in a way transmitted to the image [Fig. 1]. T.Narimanbeyov’s bright palette and tendency to decorativeness were also shown in G.Vishnevskaya’s portrait (in facial features, coloring resolution, etc.). But, in our opinion, these peculiarities were expressed more clearly in M.Rostropovich’s portrait. Well-known artists created the portraits of world-famed musician M.Rostropovich. T.Salahov and T.Narimanbeyov, who are not behind Rostropovich by their popularity, are among these artists. The images created by these two artists represented the inner world of the talented musician with rich colors.

T.Narimanbeyov is the author of two famous portraits of Rostropovich. It is interesting that both portraits were painted in 1991. Let’s have look at these portraits separately. One of them is called “M.Rostropovich – a world-class musician”. The image that created by T.Narimanbeyov in this portrait has more decorative content. Thus, he avoided the artistry peculiar to Rostropovich’s image created by T.Salahov. T.Narimanbeyov represented him playing the violoncello (as T.Salahov) [Fig. 2]. But this performance is more humanistic, colorful and decorative in T.Narimanbeyov’s portrait. T.Salahov’s harsh realism does not give an opportunity to place strange, imaginary elements in the composition. But T.Narimanbeyov’s decorativism combines imaginary

details skillfully into the general composition. Taking this advantage the artist grouped interesting imaginary appearances around the violoncello master. These are mainly the symbols of separate cities. It is interesting that the city symbols star from Baku in the right corner of the portrait and complete with Moscow in the left corner. We can see separate stops, in other words, cities of the great art route of the maestro among them: Paris, London, New York ... name of each city was written on the symbol of it in the portrait. Rostropovich's great art route that began from Baku passed through many cities of the world, met with unprecedented applause and finally ended in Moscow. This scheme expresses by the artistic means that as a personality, Rostropovich was Bakuvian, universal, Russian. It is interesting that there are architectural symbols of this or that city in this composition. The Philharmonic building, dome roof and towers are seen in the Baku part. Paris is represented by Eiffel tower, New York by skyscrapers. The most interesting and large scale architectural samples fall to Moscow's share. Three domes of Vasili Blazhenni temple (let's note that the Vasili Blazhenni temple is repeated several times in T.Narimanbeyov's creative work) are seen in the left corner of the portrait. Domes give a special colorfulness to the composition by their grandiosity, colors and decorativeness. And there are two black-eyed, black-haired small children – a boy and a girl above, who seem like angels from Azerbaijani fairytales. They throw flowers on the world-famous master's head...

The second portrait of the prominent violoncello master created by T.Narimanbeyov is also interesting. The work is called "M.Rostropovich is in his native city – Baku" (1991). It is interesting that the author wrote the name of the work in French with his handwriting in the lower right corner of the work. The composition is remembered with its bright color tones, conventional means of expression, optimistic spirit [Fig. 3].

Both portraits have decorative features peculiar to T.Narimanbeyov's creative work. M.Rostropovich was represented almost in the same pose – sitting and playing violoncello in both of them. However, there are some differences between these two portraits. The decorative conventionality is stronger in the second portrait. When T.Narimanbeyov created the image, he used a lot of conventional features, mainly blue and partially red color spots in the background, on the left side. The author represented the image of Baku peculiar to his creativity on the right side of the composition. You can see Maiden Tower, Baku Boulevard, part of the Caspian Sea here. Of course, the Baku symbol

was also represented in the other portrait of Rostropovich. But besides Baku, there are also symbols of Moscow, New York, Paris and other cities in that portrait. But the artist described only Baku in the background of the portrait here. In general, the ideological-artistic and compositional peculiarities of both portraits are revealed in their names. Rostropovich is presented as a world-class master in the first portrait and symbolic images of the big cities of the world are embodied here. But the author represented M.Rostropovich in his hometown in the second portrait and this feature is clearly seen in the name of the work. So, Rostropovich was presented as a world-famed musician and an old Bakuvian [8].

These two works are T.Narimanbeyov's portrait works. But as noted, the artist has city views on Russia theme. As a rule, Moscow, the centre of Moscow, the Golden Square, the Spasskaya Tower and Vasili Blazhenni temple were painted in these works.

Especially, the artist's "Vasili Blazhenni temple" (1991) is distinguished among the works on the Russian theme [Fig. 4]. The work is a sign of the great Azerbaijani artist's interest, respect and esteem to Russian culture, Russian morality. T.Narimanbeyov is regarded more as an artist who created decorative compositions in Azerbaijani folklore themes. Characters of Azerbaijani fairytales, national symbols, architectural monuments, the Maiden Tower, national coloring are the main features characterizing the artist's creative work. At first glance, the skill to create works on the Russian theme of such an artist can be met unbelievable. However, when we analyse the artist's creative work, we can easily see that it is not so. Undoubtedly, the Azerbaijani theme, national folklore and symbols form an important part of T.Narimanbeyov's creative work, but not all of it. In other words, a considerable part of his artistic heritage forms other motifs beyond Azerbaijan and the Russian theme settles exactly in this part. This theme was represented by considerable works. It is interesting that an artist, who had a national spirit as T.Narimanbeyov, was able to see the Russian theme with Azerbaijani artist's eyes and include temperament, colorful paints and features peculiar to our national character to the "foreign" theme. Usually, the works of Azerbaijani artists on the Russian theme remain in the shadow. This applies especially to well-known artists. In our opinion, such stereotypes do not justify themselves. On the contrary, promoting our artists' works on the Russian theme and highlighting them in the light of contemporaneity serve to both the multicultural policy of our

state and strengthening of friendly relations with the strong neighbor state and meet our national interests.

“Vasili Blazhenni Temple” work was painted in a way peculiar to the artist’s style. This is where the aspects as free composition, conditionality, decorativeness, colorfulness show themselves clearly. Although the theme is related to Russia, Azerbaijani color and temperament prevail here. In fact, this is an aspect arisen from the great artist’s mastery. He looked at the Vasili Blazhenni Temple with Azerbaijani eyes, presented it in the national spirit of Azerbaijan. The number of domes of this many-domed church (in fact, there is a separate church under each dome), which was built on a single foundation in various works of the artist, is different. The aim of the artist was not to have realistic exactness, but to represent the architectural monument in conditional, decorative spirit. Therefore, the number and appearance of the domes are conventional. Beside it, the artist represented the architectural features and colors (keeping the decorative harmony) of each dome quite accurately. The number of the domes is 7 in this work. Of course, it is difficult to represent all domes from a point of view, the limitation of number can also be explained by it. However, besides precise proportions, there is also independence arisen from decorative attitudes. The pointed roof of the bell tower of Porkov church is seen in the lower left corner. But only three domes of the Vasili Blazhenni Temple were depicted in the portrait of Rostropovich. The conditionality is stronger here. The artist placed the domes not in a straight line, but in a mixed way. Literally, mushroom like domes turned over each other. Generally, bending, turning over, even “dancing” of historical-architectural monuments are characteristic features of T.Narimanbeyov’s creative work. The Maiden Tower is also described so “lively”, balanced in some paintings of the artist. But the artist represented eight towers of Vasili Blazhenni Temple in “Moscow. Red Square” painting.

Warm colors were preferred in coloring resolution of “Vasili Blazhenni Temple” painting. Cold colors are basically the colors of artistic arrangement of individual domes, so the artist portrayed them naturally.

**Conclusion.** Optimistic holiday spirit was prevailed in the artist’s another painting related to Moscow. May Day (1st May) holiday held in Moscow, in the Red Square is described in a unique, decorative way in the work. The composition has quite large landscape size and was worked from above. The Red Square, the Spasskaya Tower of Kremlin, the Vasili Blazhenni Temple, a little behind oth-



er buildings of the city are seen in the painting. People stream, waving flags draw attention in the foreground. As the artist described the Red Square in a wide landscape form and above that we almost cannot see separate people, their faces here. The demonstrators cross the left and right sides of the Vasili Blazhenni Temple surrounded with red flags. The flags are approaching the foreground, rising up and are replaced with flowers here in the right part of the painting.

Spasskaya tower of the Kremlin is located in the centre of the composition. Other architectural monuments are grouped around it. There are red waving flags in the sides of the composition [Fig. 5].

The coloring resolution of the work is also not ignored. The artist used the contrast of his favorite colors – red and blue skillfully. The mutual use of these two colors is characteristic for T.Narimanbeyov's many paintings. But it is interesting that the color of blue wasn't almost used in "Vasili Blazhenni Temple" work, the coloring basis of this painting consists of warm colors (yellow, red, etc.). The artist applied to the coloring resolution in this painting that is more peculiar to the artist's creative work. The Kremlin tower, the Vasili Blazhenni Temple, as well as the flags and flowers were described with warm, red tones. The sky and the mysterious clouds, separate areas between flags, elements were described mainly with blue color. This work is one of T.Narimanbeyov's most interesting compositions on the Russian theme.

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### ***Xəzər Zeynalov (Azərbaycan)***

#### **Xalq rəssamı Toğrul Nərimanbəyovun yaradıcılığında rus mövzusu**

Məqalənin tədqiqat obyekti müasir dövrün istedadlı fırça ustası, Azərbaycanın Xalq rəssamı Toğrul Nərimanbəyovun yaradıcılığında rus mövzusunun ibarətdir. Müəllif qeyd edir ki, rəssamın yaradıcılığı üçün onun doğma şəhəri, bu şəhərin Qız Qalası, Şirvanşahlar sarayı, İçərişəhərin qalın divarları kimi tarixi-memarlıq rəmzləri ilə bağlı olan parlaq milli kolorit, kompozisiyanın dekorativliyi, tematika xarakterikdir. Bununla yanaşı rəssamın yaradıcılığında rus mövzusu da müəyyən yer tutur ki, bu da, müəllifin fikrincə, əsasən iki janrda – portret və mənzərə janrlarında öz əksini tapır. Bu mövzu bir sıra maraqlı işlərdən ibarətdir ki, rəssam burada onun milli tematikası üçün səciyyəvi olan parlaq və zəngin palitranı qoruyub saxlamışdır. Rəssamın dostu olan şair və rəssam Viktor Qolyavkinin, rejissor Sergey Gerasimovun, həmçinin Qalina Vişnevskaya və Mstislav Rostropoviçin portretləri diqqəti cəlb edir. Maraqlıdır ki, rəssam M.Rostropoviçin iki portretini yaratmışdır. Onların hər biri xarakterik parlaq palitra, özünəməxsus kompozisiya və ideyabədii xüsusiyyətləri ilə seçilir. Hər iki portretdə Rostropoviç violonçəldə ifa edən durumda, Bakının – öz uşaqlıq şəhərinin, eləcə də dünyanın tanınmış şəhərlərinin məşhur tarixi-memarlıq abidələrinin çevrəsində təsvir olunmuşdur. Rəssamın şəhər mənzərələri də maraq doğurur ki, bunlarda Rusiya paytaxtının məşhur memarlıq abidələri - Vasili Blajennı məbədi, Spassk qülləsi ilə birlikdə Qızıl meydan, bəzi digər binalar təsvir edilmişdir.

***Açar sözlər:*** Toğrul Nərimanbəyov, incəsənətdə rus mövzusu, Mstislav Rostropoviç, Qalina Vişnevskaya, Vasili Blajennı məbədi.

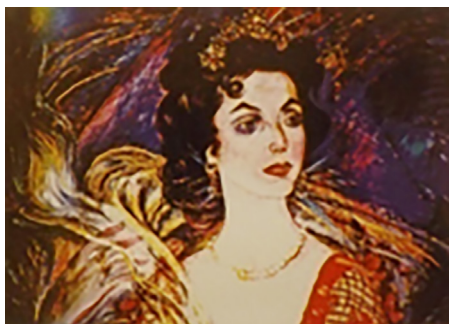
**Хазар Зейналов (Азербайджан)**

**Русская тема в творчестве народного художника**

**Тогрула Нариманбекова**

В статье предметом исследования является русская тема в творчестве видного мастера кисти современности, народного художника Азербайджана Тогрула Нариманбекова. Автор отмечает, для творчества художника характерны яркий национальный колорит, декоративность композиции, тематика, связанная с его родным городом, с такими историко-архитектурными символами, как Гыз Галасы, Дворец Ширваншахов, массивные крепостные стены Ичеришехер. Вместе с тем, определенное место в творчестве художника занимает и русская тематика, которая, по мнению автора, проявляется в двух основных жанрах – портретах и пейзажах. Это серия интересных работ, где художник сохранил яркую и богатую палитру, характерную для его национальной тематики. Вызывают интерес такие работы, как портреты поэта и художника Виктора Голявкина, друга художника, режиссера Сергея Герасимова, а также Галины Вишневской и Мстислава Ростроповича. Любопытно, что художник написал два портрета М.Ростроповича и каждый из них отличается характерной яркой палитрой, своеобразными композиционными и идейно-художественными особенностями. В обоих портретах Ростропович изображен играющим на виолончели, в окружении символических художественных элементов – известных архитектурных памятников Баку – города его детства, а также известных городов мира. Интересны также городские пейзажи художника, в которых изображены такие архитектурные достопримечательности столицы России, как собор Василия Блаженного, Красная площадь со Спасской башней, ряд других зданий.

**Ключевые слова:** Тогрул Нариманбеков, тема России в искусстве, Мстислав Ростропович, Галина Вишневская, храм Василия Блаженного.

**FIGURES:**

1. “Galina Vishnevskaya was described as performing Tosca part”. Oil, canvas. 1991.



2. “M.Rostropovich – a world-class musician”. Oil, canvas. 1991.



3. “M.Rostropovich is in his native city – Baku”. Oil, canvas. 1991.



4. “Vasili Blazhenni temple”. Oil, canvas. 1991.



5. “Moscow. Red Square”. Oil, canvas. 1991.